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UNCLAS VATICAN 006433

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR EUR/WE (MENNUTI); EUR/CACEN

FROM EMBASSY VATICAN/MESSAGE NO. 200/01

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR CLAUDIO GUGEROTTI -
NEW VATICAN AMBASSADOR TO ARMENIA AND GEORGIA

1. THE POPE HAS APPOINTED ITALIAN-BORN VATICAN OFFICIAL,
MONSIGNOR CLAUDIO GUGEROTTI, AS NUNCIO (AMBASSADOR) IN
ARMENIA AND GEORGIA. GUGEROTTI IS CURRENTLY UNDER-SECRETARY
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(NUMBER THREE) AT THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE EASTERN
CHURCHES. HE WAS BORN IN VERONA, ITALY IN 1955 AND ORDAINED
A PRIEST IN 1982. MONSIGNOR GUGEROTTI HOLDS A DOCTORAL
DEGREE IN ORIENTAL LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE AND A MASTERS
DEGREE IN LITURGY. HE HAS TAUGHT PATRISTICS, THEOLOGY AND
EASTERN RITE LITURGY AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL. GUGEROTTI ENTERED
THE VATICAN'S CIVIL SERVICE IN 1985, WORKING EXCLUSIVELY
SINCE THEN FOR THE CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCH. HE
BECAME UNDER-SECRETARY IN 1997. AS WELL AS HIS NATIVE
ITALIAN, GUGEROTTI SPEAKS FRENCH, ENGLISH, LATIN, GREEK,
CLASSICAL AND MODERN ARMENIAN, AND KURDISH. MONSIGNOR
GUGEROTTI WILL BE ORDAINED AN ARCHBISHOP PRIOR TO TAKING UP
HIS APPOINTMENT.

2. COMMENT: GUGEROTTI IS A RISING STAR IN THE VATICAN
CIVIL SERVICE. HE IS A PROTOGQ OF THE FORMER PREFECT OF THE
CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, CARDINAL ACHILLE
SILVESTRINI. GUGEROTTI IS URBANE AND EXTREMELY INTELLIGENT,
SPEAKING HIS ENGLISH WITH A MARKED BRITISH ACCENT. HE HAS
TRAVELED OFTEN TO EASTERN EUROPE AND THE NEAR EAST IN THE
SERVICE OF THE VATICAN AND IS A WELL-KNOWN FIGURE IN
ARMENIAN AND GEORGIAN CHURCH CIRCLES, BOTH CATHOLIC AND
ORTHODOX. IT IS UNUSUAL FOR A NON-CAREER VATICAN DIPLOMAT TO
BE APPOINTED AS NUNCIO IN SUCH A STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHICAL
AREA. GUGEROTTI AT 46 IS ALSO VERY YOUNG, ANOTHER TESTIMONY
TO THE ESTEEM IN WHICH BOTH THE POPE AND SENIOR VATICAN
OFFICIALS HOLD HIM. WITH THE CONSTANTLY EXPRESSED VATICAN
HOPE FOR UNITY BETWEEN ROME AND THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES,
GUGEROTTI'S APPOINTMENT AS AMBASSADOR TO ARMENIA IN
PARTICULAR AUGURS WELL FOR BRIGHTER, IF NOT POSITIVELY
EFFERVESCENT ECUMENICAL RELATIONS WITH THE CONSEQUENT
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ECCLESIASTICAL AND GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS. WATCH THIS
SPACE. END COMMENT. NICHOLSON

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